

SONGS OF THE SEA

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(SAGAR-SANGIT)

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*A translation from the Bengali by the Author with
a rendering in English verse by Aurobindo Ghose*

GANESH & CO. PUBLISHERS, MADRAS

THE CAMBRIDGE
PRESS : MADRAS

SONGS OF THE SEA

UNHOPED for, wondrous one, ever elusive,
Wait awhile that I weave thee in my song.
The calm sea lapped in dreams
Trembles to-day in the pale light of the moon !
If it be that thou hast truly come,
Then, O smiling mystery ! dwell in my heart,
What time I weave thee into song !
Stay yet awhile,
And with the melodies of the sea and the free
 Soundless rhythm of my heart
I will thee enrhythm in manner yet passing beyond
 all rhythm !
Bound then thou wilt be in the enduring solitudes
 of my heart !
Wilt thou there not abide,
O thou with the circling robe of dream,
Held fast in that music and stay in thy fulfilment,
 Eternal, unmoving ?

Songs of the Sea

STRAINING my ear
I listen to thy chanting,
O Sea, in the midst of this
Light-encircled dawn !
What words ! what tune !
My heart is full even to overflowing !
Yet do I not understand
What is it that sounds
Amidst this morning
So resonant with thy music !

Songs of the Sea

I AM gazing only upon the morn :
My heart is filled with thy song !
Slow and tranquil now the music rolls,
Now deep the notes resound,
And again its tender pity brings tears
 Into my eyes.

And at times wild, maddened it flows,
And maddening him who hears.

In thy song, say,

What is it that sounds ?

What is it that lives and breathes
 and laughs and weeps

In this thy song ?

And every limb within me trembles, only trembles
To the eternal music of thy Soul,
And I can only gaze upon the dawn !

Songs of the Sea

LO thy flute of morn is ringing
Full of festal joy ! Sun-beams
Sway ever on thy body in delight,
And make flowers blossom on the golden
 dancing waters !
And flowers blown in song and
Sunlight (golden light)
Are trembling at thy feet.
Now thy cry has become a bird of song
And with its wings smeared in dreams of gold
Flies vagrant in my heart's wide skies
In the rapture of love and in the glory of Spring.

Songs of the Sea

UPON what bosom shall I rest this burden
of bliss ?

To whom shall I make to-day a gift of tears ?

This unguessed joy, this grief unknown

In this unbounded festal day

admits no check or denial :

All this wealth of bliss breaks out in bloom,

And all my sorrow to-day is about to rise in song.

Strange is this realm of song, these groves of
flowers :

I know not how or why they shake and tremble !

Say, where shall I rest the burden of my heart,

O ocean ! on this thy festal day ?

Songs of the Sea

THAT song which sings in wave after wave
In the midst of this morn of golden dreams,
That song has filled this heart of mine
And the winds and the heavens are singing that
self-same song.

What hast thou made of me to-day ?
My mind is like a harp of hundred strings !
With the touch of thy finger it trembles and
quivers ;
It bursts out in music in pride and in glory !

Songs of the Sea

BEHOLD *Usha* has come far-floating from
eternity.

Her limbs are clad in the white light of dreams !

Wave beats, on wave

Dream-gathering in this white dream-light !

The heavens are fulfilled.

There is eternal music on all sides

And the winds are still.

Straining thy breast full of vast yearning

Thou makest the stillness of sound

in thy trance of song !

O Minstrel of infinity, where does thy music sound ?

In what soundless world ? in the silence of what

Eternal dawn ?

Songs of the Sea

I HAVE no art of speech, nor skill of language,
I know not the tune of song,
Nor *Tan*, nor *Laya* nor *Man*,
But within my mind the free heavens dwell,
And of the shadow of the infinite my heart is full.
I hear its voice in the sound of thy song,
In the light of the dawn and in the darkness
of night.

Therefore have I opened the door of my heart :
It is myself I seek in thy chant,
Of this wondrous union some few hymns
Have filled my soul. I place them at thy feet !

Songs of the Sea

ALL day thy music sounds in my heart,
A lyre am I in thy hands to strike.
Thine instrument wholly am I.
Play thou ever on me,
By day and night in light and darkness,
On that shore where none else are !
And in the lonely skies.
In the region of Maya,
In the shadowy realms,
In the young:morn full of hope,
And yet again in the evening without desires
 though full of yearning !
Oh Musican, I am but this lyre,
Play then on me
In thy wondrous darkness which is yet not dark.

Songs of the Sea

TAKING hold of my life

What is the play which thou hast not played ?

Wondrously indeed hast thou opened the eyes of
my mind ;

My heart as it were some bud

Has burst into bloom with thy song.

How my life like a full-blown flower

With fragrance and wondrous hues

Is filled with deep and vague longings !

Thy song has made of my life a tune eternal.

O Sea, it sings, it sings, all day, all night.

Songs of the Sea

IN the wondrous region of song
My heart made restless with music
Wings its way like a bird !
But no where and never do I find its end :
In this shoreless region of song I poise and fly.
Endless is this solitude of eternal sound,
Soundless are the remembrances of this strange
music.

Sinking myself in this eternal region of song,
No where and never do I sound its depths.
Oh unfathomed endless realm of song,
Wherein unfolds in silence the lotus of my mind !

Songs of the Sea

O PAINTER! with what dexterous art hast thou
created,

How countless are the hues of the wondrous flowers
Which in thy bower of blossoms

Thou hast made bloom to life!

Thy bower of richness incomparable, full of
wondrous light!

My eyes ever wander

Yearning to see the loveliness of thy flowers!

But to-day I seek not thy bower of bloom,

Longing only for thy song,

Far will I float on the waves of its sound

And sink in their depths.

Paint with thy brush deep darkness on the canvas
of my eyes;

Let me lie then wholly blind.

I will sink and sink in this sea of sound,

Which alone shall be.

Let the universe vibrate in countless melodies of
myriad songs.

Songs of the Sea

WHAT it is which to-day is floating revealing thy
breast

Like some brilliant dream in this full-moon night ?

What infinite peace in its moonbeams lies !

How musically it flows unchecked and joyfully
into thy heart !

Is it the shadow of dreams of lives now past ?

As the fruit of what past virtue has it surged
into thy heart ?

What dead illusion awakes in thy life to paint
this dream ?

In my heart to-day is shining only

In waves of moonlight a hundred flowers of memory,

Moved by the tears and laughter of a hundred lives

My heart bursts into song in this ocean of song ;

Then all my lives become as one

And float like a single flower upon the sea of
dream.

Songs of the Sea

NOW the day is filled with clouds

and darkness grey :

Wave leaps on wave

And with pain unquiet, restless, is trembling, shaking,

Swelling and roaring as a giant cry !

To-day the very heavens are shadowed with grey
darkness !

A vast outcry is in my soul to-day.

Is it joy ? Is it pain ? Is it from the depths of love

This cry so restless, wild and mad ?

What is it thou singest,

What dost thou demand, O heart ?

To-day the very heavens are full of darkness gray.

Songs of the Sea

TO-DAY the sky is filled with darkness
And full of madness fly thy winds !
The storms of pralaya fling their shade
 On thy dark breast
And thy song wild with madness
Rolls as thunder in my heart !
Then come, come surging, O thou mad sea !
My breast is bared to thee in the darkness !
Let me float ! Let me sink !
The darkness of death is in the sky
 and in the winds !
And this ? but the signal of Pralaya !

Songs of the Sea

NOR a garland of flowers in a bower

Of dreams is this !

Nor is it the soft music

Which streams from some sweet instrument !

This is but Rudra ! The world is sinking !

The torrent of pralaya rushes on in its deadly play !

Wild stormwinds blow, through darkened space

Fathomless depths leap up to the skies,

Amidst this clamorous call of death

And the dreadful laughter of eternity !

This night of darkness is without lightning,

Wherein only thunders roll.

Death cries from out thy wounded breast !

In thy mad torrents a myriad serpents of Infinity

spread their countless hoods !

Here is pralaya wildly terrible.

A million demons madly utter shouts of terror,

And death calls out from infinite darkness.

Songs of the Sea

THIS eternal storm has filled my soul !
Torn sail, broken rudder, my mind's boat sinks.
On the waters of Pralaya,
On the brink of death
My heart is helpless in this eternal darkness.
Come, then, in the image of death,
O thou royal Sea :
To-day thou shall dwell within my bosom unbared.

Songs of the Sea

O THOU fierce death ! O Jati-Jatadhara !

Draw back, draw back thy trident of pralaya,

Leave Life to live and die to the music of its soul

In its own bower !

On the endless sea of Time

Full of its own joy and sorrow

The lotus of creation floats and trembles !

Leave it, let it fully blossom,

Let it wither and die !

O Rudra ! O thou sea of Pralaya !

Songs of the Sea

STAY! O stay thy chariot, blind Conqueror!

Lay down thy arrow.

Behold the soft-footed evening silently approaches

And the skies are full of a mellow light,

Stay thy chariot! Rest thyself,

O conqueror mine!

O tired and weary of strife!

Vain was this war, vain

My heart to conquer,

For I all too willing

was about to yield.

Now in thy temple will I light the evening lamp

And my hymns shall fill thy heart,

I will spread a cool couch for thee to lie upon

And at thy feet place a vessel of cool water.

Vain was this war for me, vain,

I all too willing was about to yield!

Songs of the Sea

THOU hast turned back, O Lord !
To the home of my heart :
To the fullness of fruits and flowers
Amidst winds that are glad !
Thy Song of Pralaya has ceased to-day,
Life settles on thy lids and lips again !
Once more I gaze upon thy joyous dawn !
What gladness flows from heart to heart !
And my soul which longs for thy song
Will blossom, and blossom again,
And will ever flow in song when thou shalt call :
And the heavens are resonant with music's sound
And the winds are laden with the
 fragrance of the flowers !

Songs of the Sea

OVER thy limbs, O Sea,
The light of the young dawn
Flows like billows of gold !
And at every moment
Some new dream glimmers !
To-day thou rockest in a golden swing,
Robing thyself like some royal lover !
Thy love flows and floats in waves of gold
And fills my heart with golden dreams.
And I to thee have brought a soul
Full of the light of dawn
To leave it, to leave it at thy feet !
A garland of golden lilies
My hands have wrought
To place around thy golden neck.
And bound together with the self-same string
We too shall lie ! in the tender lap of *Usha*
And in the solitudes of dream !

Songs of the Sea

TO-DAY the sky sings in mournful strain,
Sings in the mournful strain of a heart which
yearns.

What do the clouds say ?

Why do the winds cry,

Wandering in the skies and kissing the sea

In a mournful strain ?

To-day my heart cries out in deep mournful strain!

What dost thou seek, my heart ? What dost thou
need ?

Where stayest thou ? whither fliest thou ?

Far and not far !

O why does it rush to the clouds

And sing with so full a heart

In so mournful a strain,

And no measure there is nor Tan

In its heart of hearts !

And the skies sing out in mournful strain !

Songs of the Sea

SLEEP ! now sleep ! O sea of mine !

Close thy song-weary eyes :

In the hushed quietness of the clouded noons

And under the lonely skies !

In this darkly luminous region, repose :

I sit upon thy shore, my two eyes gaze upon thy
face !

Yet sleep ! O sleep ! my heart keeps vigil !

With what soundless strain does it tremble ?

When shall I know thee as thou art, O friend !

When wilt thou wake ? In what grand poem vast ?

I will wait for thee : I will wait for thee !

Stretch out thine arms in some dim eve at last !

Songs of the Sea

WHEN have I seen thee, clasped thy hand,
Gazed into thine eyes!
In what distant time? In what forgotten land?
Did I speak to thee then? What song didst thou
sing to me,
And smiling looked into my face?
Then was the heart so full to overflowing
With tears unshed of the deepest passion?
Then did the depths of my heart throb
With such thought, such grief, such sobbing strains?
Then didst thou clasp me to thy bosom
With close-encircling arms
Like a friend full of deepest affection?
Did all thy thoughts then flow into my heart
Led by love's sweet mantras?
All I remember not, but only this,
In some dim past age and distant clime
I know thee, I know thee,
My heart felt thee, O Friend!

Songs of the Sea

And because thy touch is awake in my mind,
I float out to thee in the present times !
I think to-day in some strange, secret trysting-place
We two shall meet at last
And each other recognize !
And in some enchanted space
Of half-light and half-darkness
All that old love of ours
Will awaken again !

Songs of the Sea

NONE is yet awake but I,
In this silent loneliness we two shall meet.
The sun has not risen, but I go forth
To bathe in the glory of thy soul !
Thy outward song shall for ever outward remain,
The songs that all may hear are for all ;
Give me the song which day and night
In the depths of thy soul for ever sings !
I will take it away and keep it with me.
And with its music I shall fill my soul !
Therefore, O Sea ! O Friend ! I come alone,
And it is for the hope of that song that I am awake.

Songs of the Sea

THE sun has not yet risen. Alluring darkness
Is upon thee and around thee
Like a veil of love !

There is calm in thy face and peace in thine eyes,
Whether thou sleep or dream or wake.
In this hushed light of visible darkness
How calm and beautiful is thy gaze, O sea !
My speech, my song have suddenly grown still

In the dim twilight.

Am I not as thy brother younger born ?

Then at times take care of me

And gaze upon me with eyes of love !

May the song which in thy great heart

Is incessantly sung,

Sound even in my breast from time to time.

Songs of the Sea

THE rays of the sun are upon thy face
Calm and profound like thy own glory !
All my million golden flowers of dream
Out of my soul thou hast utterly drawn,
And now wearest as a garland upon thy neck !
I stand upon thy shore with empty hands, O my
 sea !

Sing me one chant of thine !
Let it flow like endless nectar within my bosom !
So that for ever and ever its echo may sound
And fill my heart with wondrous joy,
And from to-day, O endless ! O sea !
Thy song only will I sing
Wandering from land to land.

Songs of the Sea

NAY, nay, let it be !

O ! not to-day that sound ! before this multitude

Sing the songs that all may hear !

These have robed themselves in the robe of revelry.

Take hold of this heart,

Make them laugh and dance !

But when midnight comes and wraps thee in dark-
ness

And the stream of laughter here ceases to flow,

We two shall meet, we two shall sing together

And the world shall close in song about us twain,

And all around only darkness watch.

Thou shalt sing out one chant and I another.

We two shall float and flow in endless joy,

And from out thy soul will come eternal gladness

Which touching me will make me sink into thy
depths !

We two shall sing and meet in song

When thickest night shall wrap thee again !

Songs of the Sea

FOR how many aeons hast thou billowed like this
With the torture of this music in thy heart ?
For how many cycles of time
Has this song been wringing,
Tearing thy heart, and maddening the world ?
Through endless ages ! Through countless lives !
O thou without beginning or end !
In the spread of thy splendour
How can this cry of pain eternally ring ?
What hunger sobs within thy breast, O sea !
What thirst of passion ?
What tireless anguish implacably moans ?
A million lives, a thousand ages !
O friend cursed thus through unending ages,
O my unquiet ocean all of tears,
It is for thee leaving all I come,
It is to thee that I shall come again
Though endless ages, in unnumbered lives !

Songs of the Sea

WHAT is it that draws me to thee, O ocean ?
Where lies the secret of our unity ?
In what years, what clime ?
On what dim distant shore ?
Udara, Mudara, Tara,
In the sphere of what musical scale ?
In the eternal home of what vast sound ?
In the heart of what music ?
In the soul of what song ?
In the mystery of what beaten time ?
In the spirit of what nameless tune ?
From the eternal soul, infinite without beginning
In two soul streams we two have flowed.
Then thereafter in how many lives
Heart to heart we met again and again !
And how oft parted, O sea !
To-day we meet again, only thou and I.
Thou floatest, O friend, for ever to the Vast :
But I float only in thy chant !

Songs of the Sea

MY sleepless night thou has filled indeed
With torrents of sound, O king of song !
In the darkness of night what splendour of sound
Beats on my eyes, my face and breast
Like splashes of the sea ! And like a flower
Self-offered to the storm, my heart is trembling.
Burdened by all joy
And torn with all agonies
A wild great song rolls through this darkness.
I cannot see thy face,
Only a rumour and infinity
Is within my breast :
A hundred strains of soundless music lie awake
And the eternal silence of a thousand songs.
I hear the unspoken message of every sound,
I feel the heart unsung of every song.

Songs of the Sea

THE while I played with some small lamps
Inside my room still humming a trivial tune,
And placed in their rays with absent mind
The little pictures of a bounded dream,
Thee I had quite forgotten, O vast ocean.
Well did my dream-bound little playroom please !
And in the rays of these lamps
I was holding and beholding
The flowers of my garland lazily wrought.
But as thou didst call with the roar of thy thunder
In the infinitely musical voice of thy soul,
My life over-flooded its banks
In the heart-churning torrents of thy sound.
Down came my little play-room : out went the lamps :
And I sank upon thy breast !

Songs of the Sea

THE sun is about to set,
The evening has not yet descended,
And over thee both light and darkness play.
The clouds are floating by gazing and gazing on thee
And the charmed winds murmuringly sing.
Wonderful is this darkness of uncertain light.
Heaven gazes down with wondering eyes.
O ocean ! from what region of shadows
Singing thou to-day a song of sadness
In notes of doubt ?
To what vast problem hast thou found no answer
yet ?
With what sad doubt is thy heart burdened ?
What converse holdest thou to-day with life and
death ?
What strings of thy heart are broken
And what pain outrings ?
All shafts of light, all shadows of darkness

Songs of the Sea

Pour from thy soul on my being, O sea,
And my heart becomes a trembling shadow
Amidst these uncertain shades.
What hope is here or truth ?
What fear trembles ? what lie invades ?

Songs of the Sea

TO what region floweth thy song to-day
On gray waves in the stillness of evening ?
Where in what far off darkness does it sound ?
O ! what has it done with my heart to-day ?
As if the conch-shells of *Arati* are blown,
It is made pure with the smoked fragrance
Of frankincense, and thy song sounds
 passionless, desireless and yet full of
 deep yearning !
O vast worshipper ! what worship doest thou
 perform to-day ?
Towards whom holdest thou up
The lamp of my heart, chanting what mantras ?
Give me *diksha*, O Guru !
Grant me my *mantra*
And with the hymns of thy worship fill my heart !

Songs of the Sea

NOW evening has come, the note of *poorabi* sounds
O sea ! within thy calm, quiet breast.
In the deep resonance of that heart-yearning melody
From heart to heart flows a silent song.
The garrulous waves have sunk to sleep
And the unquiet winds have ceased to murmur :
In heaven there is no light, nor moon nor star
As if a great void has seized the world.
Is there no last desire left in thy heart
 of hearts to-day ?
Is love quite dead ? and all thy *Karma* finished ?
In this gray, shadowy, illusionless evening
Thou plungest down into thy depths ;
I too will hide within my being.
When thy musing is done call out to me,
 And I will awake !

Songs of the Sea

VOICELESS are the great heavens !
There is a stillness everywhere !
Evening sheds on all thy body
A vast peace and an infinite quietness !
O shoreless Sea !
Wordless art thou to-day,
A sea of peace and purity.
Thy silent anthem in this peaceful evening
Keeps living and glowing in thy soul its light and
 its ecstasy,
And all thy body in that bliss dwells,
And all the littleness of joy and grief sinks within.
Creation to-day seems like a lotus floating in
 water ;
Death and time have paused arrested at thy feet !
Deep, unbreathing, with eyes fixed, motionless,
A Yogin has indeed formed his mystic seat within
 my breast.

Songs of the Sea

I have seized only a glimpse, but I could not reach,
With folded hands I wait :
Make me as one with thee.

Songs of the Sea

IN prayer and devotion to-day the very skies
Are full of blossoming flowers,
Thy two eyes swim in heavenwardness
And in waves of melting kindness
Thy waters dancing softly flow.
The roll of *Kirtan* sweeps over the world
And the air is filled with the deep music of devotion.
Haribole ! Haribole ! The *Karatal* clash
And *Mridanga* never sounded so deep in my heart
before.

In this joyous *Kirtan*, the free morning air
Is dancing round and round my heart
In the wild ecstasy of divine madness,
My heart is mad for God !
With what sweet yearning of love hast thou filled
its depths !
O joy of heart, O enveloping restful heart of joy !
In the eagerness of reaching thee,

Songs of the Sea

In the anxiety of failing,

I sink and sink

And rising float and float again !

O devotee, O heart full of prayerfulness !

Sing thy Kirtan anew !

Keep me with thee for ever in thy prayers and
devotion.

Songs of the Sea

HERE there is light ! There is darkness there

on thy other shore !

Ferry my heart thither upon thy waters, O ocean !

There within thee I know not what dwells !

There in thy song, it is light that sings

or darkness cries !

Thither will I go, my eyes shall see

And my soul shall hear,

Is it light that sings or darkness cries

In thy song there ?

Songs of this shore

In my heart I have gathered,

I will weave a garland of these on that thy other
shore.

Ferry me, ferry me over thy waters to thy other
shore !

Songs of the Sea

BURNS there on that other shore like a mystery
The light that no one has yet seen in eve or dawn ?
Rings there incessantly the sound of that song
No one has yet heard through day or night ?
Sits there on that other shore
Any one like me athirst,
With his heart passionately yearning
For a touch of thy soul ?
There shall I see, vast, unsurpassed
The shadows of thy soul, a glimpse of thy great
heart ?
My thirst is great, O heart of heart !
Deep, deep is the thirst in my heart unsatisfied !
Drown me completely, O Soul ! O Sea !
Float me over to that other shore !

Songs of the Sea

I CANNOT any more float and float
Only between this and thy other shore !
O take me to-day where thou art shoreless !
My heart is overflowing.
Its banks are drowned,
Except in thy unbanked immensity where can it
rest ?

A thick darkness has encompassed me to-day,
A vast loneliness is within my being
Full of dumb weeping with no tears to ease.
To-day my heart is mad for thee, O Soul ;
I have sought thee within thy million waves
And wherever the sound of thy song resounds.
In the wondrous light and shades
which to thee belong,

I have sought thee every night and every day !
O my friend Eternal, unknown to me my friend !
O pilot of my soul !
Take me away to-day ! O take me thither
Where thou art shoreless indeed !

Songs of the Sea

*O THOU unhopèd-for elusive wonder of the skies,
Stand still one moment ! I will lead thee and bind
With music to the chambers of my mind.
Behold how calm to-day this sea before me lies
And quivering with what tremulous heart of dreams
In the pale glimmer of the faint moonbeams.
If thou at last art come indeed, O mystery, stay
Woven by song into my heart-beats from this day.*

*Stand, goddess, yet ! Into this anthem of the seas
With the pure strain of my full voiceless heart
Some rhythm of the rhythmless, some part
Of thee I would weave to-day, with living harmonies
Peopling the solitude I am within.
Wilt thou not here abide on that vast scene,
Thou whose vague raiment edged with dream haunts us
and flees,
Fulfilled in an eternal quiet like the sea's ?*

Songs of the Sea

I LEAN to thee a listening ear
And thy immense refrain I hear,
O ocean circled with the lights of morn.
What word is it thou singst ? what tune
My heart is filled with, and it soon
Must overflow ? What mystical unborn
Spirit is singing in thy white foam-caves ?
What voice turns heaven to music from thy
waves ?

Songs of the Sea

LONG gazing on this dawn and restless sea,
My heart is moved with a strange minstrelsy.
Tranquil and full and slow that music's sound
Or a chant pitiful, tender and profound.
At times its passing fills my heart with tears.
Maddened it runs and maddening him who hears.
What spirit lives and laughs and weeps in thee ?
What thought is here that cries eternally ?
I know not, but a trembling sweet and strong
Has taken my every limb touched by thy song,
O infinite voice, O soul that calls to me,
As I look on this luminous dawn and on the sea !

Songs of the Sea

THE flute of dawn has rung out on the sea,
And in a holiday of festal glee
The radiant sunbeams dally and happily stream :
How on thy body they wallow, laugh and gleam !
Flowers blown in song on a bright welter cast !
The riches of sunlight quiver along thy vast
Sweet tumult, kindle the world thy chantings hold,
Or, rocking, for thy feet are chains of gold.
Now has thy cry become a bird of sound,
And on the wings, the throbbing breast around
A dream of gold is smeared ; in my heart's skies
The beautiful vagrant making springtide flies.
There wings the floating mighty creature, joys
Threading and lights, a glory and a voice.

Songs of the Sea

UPON what bosom shall I lay my bliss
Or whom enrich with all my welling tears,
The unguessed joy, the grief that nameless is
And will not be denied? All checks they pierce.
The riches of my bliss have broken in bloom,
And all my sorrow seeks melodious room.
How have they made of all my secret hours
A kingdom of strange singing in groves of flowers
A mystic wind, a nameless trouble keeps
My spirit. All the load of my heart's deeps
Where shall I rest, moved to thy passionate play,
O Ocean, upon this thy festal day?

Songs of the Sea

DAWN has become to me a golden fold
Of shining dreams, hearing thy potent cry.
A marvel chant on every wave is rolled,
And sky and wind repeat one melody.
What hast thou done? My mind has grown a lyre
Whose many hundred strings thy tones inspire;
Thy touch, thy hand have made it eternally
A refrain of thy pride and majesty.

Songs of the Sea

BEHOLD, the perfect-gloried dawn has come
Far-floating from eternity her home.
Her limbs are clad in silver light of dreams,
Her brilliant influence on the waters streams,
And in that argent flood to one white theme
Are gathering all the hues and threads of dream.
Tricked with her fire the heavens richly fill ;
To an eternal chant the winds are still ;
And all thy bosom's deep unquiet taken
Thou hast wrung out and into melody shaken,
And all the sounds that stirred the earth so long
Are called into a worldless trance of song.
O minstrel of infinity ! What world
Soundless has known that music ? What ether
 curled
In voiceless sleep ? Where are those notes with-
 drawn ?
Into the hush of what eternal dawn ?

Songs of the Sea

I HAVE no art of speech, no charm of song,

Rhythm nor measure nor the lyric pace.

No words alluring to my skill belong.

Now in me thought's free termless heavens
efface

Limit and mark ; upon my spirit is thrown

The shadow of infinity alone.

I at thy voice in brilliant dawn or eve

Have felt strange formless words within my
mind.

Then my heart's doors wide to thy cry I leave

And in thy chant I seek myself and find.

Now some few hymns of that dim union sweet

Have filled my soul. I bring them to thy feet.

Songs of the Sea

WHAT is this play thou playest with my life ?
How hast thou parted lids mind held so stiff
Against the vision, that like a bud shut long
My mind has opened only to thy song,
And all my life lies like a yearning flower
Hued, perfumed, quivering in thy murmurous power,
And all my days are grown an infinite strain
Of music sung by thee, O shoreless main ?

Songs of the Sea

MY heart wings restless with this music's pain,
Bird of some wonderful harmonious reign :
No time, no place it meets, touches no end,
But rests and flies in melody contained.
Song's boundless regions have no isle preferred,
Its depths no plummet moment yet has found.
Memories and strange deep silences are heard
Here in thy solitude of shoreless sound.
Thou melody fathomless ! O sea where floats
Song timeless ! What were these immortal notes
To which my heart could silently disclose
The hidden petals of the eternal rose ?

Songs of the Sea

O PAINTER, thou thy marvellous art didst use
In green and pearl and blue and countless hues
To make this pattern of myriad flowers untold,
Passions of azure, miracles of gold.

My eyes had hunger for form's mysteries
And wandered in vision upon colour's seas.
Paint out these hues ! draw darkness like a brush
Over these tired eyelids ! blind me, hush !

Ah, not for visible delight I long !
My soul enchanted only by thy song
I will swim out upon thy waves of sound,
O voice, and sink into thee for ever drowned.
Then shall I pass into thy hymn, O sea.
There shall be nothing else to eternity.
The universe shall but to sound belong,
And Time and Space shall tremble into song.

Songs of the Sea

O NOW to-day like a too brilliant dream

What is this that thy floating heart reveals
In the full moon's intense wide-flowing beam ?

What infinite peace from thy calm moonlight
steals

Waking my breast to this unchecked delight ?
What melody moves thee in the luminous night ?

What shadow of a dream from lives long past
Returns into thy ancient heart, O sea ?
What bygone virtue comes fulfilled at last ?

What dead illusion paints this dream on thee ?
A hundred glimmering memories break like flowers
On waves of moonlight in my life's still hours.

It seems as if a hundred lives' joy, fears
And burden of their laughter and their tears
To-day came round me and incessantly
Sang to my soul their anthem in this sea.

Songs of the Sea

A million lives to-day have met in one
And float on dream a single flower alone.

Songs of the Sea

THE day is filled with clouds and dusk and grey.

Wave sobbing falls on wave; there flowers,
there rocks

A pain unquiet in their broken shocks.

Trembling there moans a large lament to-day.

The heavens are filled with dusk and sad and grey.

An endless outcry fills my soul to-day.

Is't joy? is't pain? Are these the depths of
love!

Troubled, restless, peering with wild crests
above,

What is it cries, what yearns in thee this day,

O heart? Thy heavens are full and dusk and grey.

Songs of the Sea

TO-DAY the heavens are sealed with clouds and
blind,

A leaping madman comes the pathless wind,
The rains of deluge flee, a storm-tossed shade,
Over thy breast of gloom. Loud and dismayed
Thy lost enormous chant rolls purposeless

Seeking its end in an unregioned space.

O come, thou great mad sea, O surging come!

My breast defenceless mates thy dolorous foam.

Darkness the heavens, the wind doom's signal
breath,

I shall float on through thee or sink in death.

Songs of the Sea

THIS is not now the lyre's melodious stream,
These are not now the blossoming groves of dream,
But Rudra's torrent comes with pitiless play :
The world sinks down as on its last wild day.
The fathomless depths leap up to mix the sky ;
Winds of destruction's sport walk tenebrously.
Masses of driving death go chanting by,
The dreadful laughters of eternity.
No lightning cleaves the night thy thunders fill ;
Thy wounded bosom pours out clamour and wail ;
The myriad serpents of infinitude
Their countless hoods above thy waves extrude.
I hear mid the loud stormwinds and the night
A voice arise of terror infinite ;
Death's shoutings in a darkness without shore
Join like a million Titans' hungry roar.

Songs of the Sea

WHEN thy enormous wind has filled my breast,
Torn sail and broken rudder shall have rest.
My soul shall refugeless, a sinking boat,
Go down in thy fierce seas nor wish to float.
I under thy brow of great destruction's frown
In the eternal darkness shall lie down
Upon that other coast remote and dumb.
Though in the image of death to-day thou come,
My heart keeps open for thee thy house, this breast.
O king, O sea, enter and dwell and rest.

Songs of the Sea

O HIGH stark Death, ascetic proud and free,
Draw back thy trident of eternity :
Leave, leave my days their natural life and death
Reclined in the heart's grove, lulled with music's
breath.

The lotus of creation like a rhyme
Trembling with its own joy and sorrow long
On the harmonious ocean of old Time
Has floated, heaven above the infinite song.
O great last death of all, leave yet to stay
Or pass, to fade or bloom my little day.

Songs of the Sea

O LOUD blind conqueror, stay thy furious car,
Lay down thy arrow. Evening from afar
Comes pacing with her smooth and noiseless step
And dusk pale light of quiet in heavens of sleep.
Stay then thy chariot, rest ! O tired with strife !
O wearied soul of death ! conqueror of life !
Vain was thy war, O Lord, my soul to win ;
Myself was giving myself without that pain.
Now I will light the evening lamps for thee,
My soul with vesper hymns thy fane shall be,
And I will spread a cool couch for thy sleep
And at thy feet calm's holy water keep.
What need, to conquer me, hadst thou to strive,
Who only longed unasked myself to give ?

Songs of the Sea

THOU hast come back, O Lord ! this soul, thy sky,
Looks glad on flowers and fruits and ecstasy :
Ceased has thy song of death, thy call of pain,
Life settles on thy lips and lids again.
Once more I look upon thy joyous dawn
And the links of rapture twixt our hearts are drawn.
My heart leans out to hear thy song. Ah, when
Thy voice calls, all its buds shall open then,
While mid the touch of breezes wrapped in flowers
Cry under lyric heavens the harmonious hours.

Songs of the Sea

THE light of the young dawn round every limb

Sweeps over thee as golden billows may ;

Out every moment glimmers some new dream.

Thou in a swing of gold hast sat at play.

Like a great king thou robest thyself, O sea,

And pourest thy love in waves of precious gold,

Like a young royal lover lavishly

Chasing my heart with wealth though every
fold.

And I to thee a youthful soul have brought

Full of the dawn to lay it at thy feet.

A wreath of lilies gold my hands have wrought,

For thy rich golden neck a carcanet.

We two together bound shall lie and gleam

Golden with dawn in solitudes of dream.

Songs of the Sea

O TO-DAY in heaven there rings

High a mournful strain,

Till our empty hearts beat slow

And of ending fain.

Mournful moans the cloud, mournfully and loud

Kissing ocean, roaming heaven in vain

Hear the winds complain !

And to-day with lost desire

Sobs my spirit like a lyre

Wakened to complain.

For it seeks a want it cannot name,

Aching with a viewless flame

Knows not how to rest nor where to flee,

Only wailing knows and pain.

Towards the clouds it soars up fitfully,

Lured it knows not where nor why ;

Singing only from the soul

Songs of bitter dole !

Songs of the Sea

Neither rhythm keeps nor cry

Of saving measure, fitfully

Wailing out its shapeless pain.

They have filled the heavens and filled my soul,

Songs of weeping wild and bitter dole,

Chants of utter pain.

Songs of the Sea

SLEEP, sleep through clouded moons, O sea, at
last

Under a lonely sky ; thy eyelids close
Wearied of song. Held are the regions fast ;
Mute in the hushed and luminous world repose.

I sit upon thy hither shore, O main,
My gaze is on thy face. Yet sleep, O sleep !
My heart is trembling with a soundless strain,
My soul is watching by thy slumber deep.

When shall I know thee who thou art, O friend ?
When wilt thou wake ? with what grand paeon
vast ?

Lo, I will wait for thee. Thou at the end
Stretch out thy arms in some dim eve at last.

Songs of the Sea

WHERE have I seen thee ? where have clasped thy
hand ?

When gazed into thy eyes ? what distant time
Saw our first converse ? what forgotten land ?

Sangst thou ? or was thy laughter heard sub-
lime ?

Then was the soul so full of deepest pains ?

Were then the eyes so ready with their tears ?
Such thoughts, such griefs, so many sobbing strains.

Played on our soul-strings in those distant
years ?

Then didst thou take me to thy bosom wide

Like a kind friend with close-encircling arm ?
Did all my thoughts into thy nature glide

Led out by love as with a whispered charm ?

Songs of the Sea

All I remember not, but this alone,

My heart joined thine in some past age or
clime ;

Because thy touch has never from me gone,

I float to thee across eternal Time.

I think in a strange secret trysting-place

We too shall meet at last and recognise,

Where day weds night in some enchanted space,

All the old love awakening in our eyes.

Songs of the Sea

NONE is awake in all the world but I ;

While the sun hesitated, I upstood
And met thee in a grandiose secrecy
To lave my soul in thy majestic flood.

Be outward songs the outward nature's part !

These are for all and all their tones may hear.
There is a strain that fills the secret heart :
Reveal that music to my listening ear.

Therefore, O sea, O friend, I came alone,
That I might hear that rapture or that moan.

Songs of the Sea

THE sun has not yet risen. Luring night
Shelters thee still as with a robe of love.
Calm are thy lips, thy eyes have tranquil light.
Whether thou sleep or dream or wake or move.

In the last trance of darkness visible
How beautiful and calm thy gaze, O sea !
My speech, my song have suddenly grown still
In this enamoured twilight's ecstasy.

Am I not as thy brother younger born ?
Then sometimes turn a loving gaze, O sea.
The song that shakes thy bosom night and morn
Bid echo sometimes, Ocean, even in me.

Songs of the Sea

THE sunbeams fall and kiss thy lips and gleam

Calm and profound like thy own majesty:

How all my million golden flowers of dream

Out of my soul thou hast drawn utterly,

And these thou wearest as a garland now ;

I stand with empty hands upon thy shore.

Sing me one chant of thine ! Ah, let it flow

An endless nectar and my soul explore

With echoes and with lights, and turn thy gaze

For ever and for ever on my days,

And from to-day, O Ocean without strand,

Thy song I'll sing, wandering from land to land.

Songs of the Sea

NAY, nay, let be! O not to-day that sound

Before these multitudes, but what all can hear!
These robed for joy have come thy margin round;
Draw close their hearts to thine, give dance and
cheer.

But when the midnight broods on thee again,
These happy laughers sunk upon thy swell,
The world shall close in song about us twain
And darkness shall stand there as sentinel.

Thou shalt sing out one chant, a different song
From me return; we shall together lie
In infinite gladness while ambrosial, long,
Thy thunders drown me in their harmony.

When thickest night shall hold again thy shore,
We two shall meet in song and join once more.

Songs of the Sea

HOW many aeons hast thou flowed like this,
The torture of this music in thy heart?
World-maddening melodies that stormed heart to
kiss

After what cycles from thy surge still part,
Recalling endless ages,
Regretting countless lives?

Birthless and endless, bearing from the first
Eternal wailing thou sweepst on, O sea.
What hunger sobs in thee? what vehement thirst?
What tireless anguish moans implacably?
Moans many a thousand ages,
Moans many a million lives,

O friend cursed thus through the unending years!
O my unquiet ocean all of tears!
Yet 'tis to thee that leaving all I come,
As always came I to my real home

Songs of the Sea

And always shall come in the endless years,
Parted through endless ages,
Met in unnumbered lives.

Songs of the Sea

WHAT years, what clime, what dim and distant
shore

Beheld our meeting first ? What thundrous roar
Or low sweet plaint of music first had bound
In what eternal seats of what vast sound ?
What heart of mighty singing devious-souled,
What mystery of beaten time controlled ?
The spirit of what nameless tune could bring
Our births to oneness from their wandering ?
From some huge soul's beginningless infinity
Our waters side by side began their course, O sea.
How often our lives have parted been since then !
How often have our two hearts met again !
Thou floatst, O friend, for ever to that Vast ;
I float on thy chant only to the last.

Songs of the Sea

MY sleepless midnight thou hast filled indeed

With seas of song, O King of minstrelsy.

What pomps of sound through the thick night
proceed !

What surf, what surge of thunders rolls over
me !

My eyes, my face are covered with thee, O main,

My heart sunk down beneath thy echo-plain.

My soul like a flower offered to the storm

Trembles. What wild great song without a form

Burdened with all the joys a heart can feel,

Torn with all agonies no joy can heal,

Rolls through this darkness ? Nothing do I see,

Only a rumour and infinity

I feel upon my bosom lay its weight,

A clamouring vague vastness increate.

A hundred strains left voiceless to the ear,

A thousand silences of song I hear.

Of universal sound the worldless tongue

Songs of the Sea

That in each voice and cry is hidden deep,
The heart unsung of all songs ever sung
Comes to me through the veils of death and sleep.

Songs of the Sea

LIGHTING small lamps and in a little room

I played and poorly hummed a trivial theme ;
With the lamp's rays on my soul's half-lit gloom

I traced the image of a bounded dream.

Thee I had quite forgotten, Ocean vast :

Well did my dream-bound little play-room
please,

An idly-plaited wreath before me placed,

Holding my petty lamp, content, at ease.

Then with thy solemn thunders didst thou call

Chanting eternity in thy deep strain ;

Thy huge rebuke shook all my nature, all

The narrow coasts of thought sank crumbling in.
Collapsed that play-room and that lamp was
quenched.

I stood in Ocean's thunders washed and drenched.

Songs of the Sea

EVENING has not descended yet, fast sets the sun ;
Darkness and light together seize on thee as one.
Gazing upon thy luminous dusk the clouds float by,
The charmed wind o'er thy troubled lights sings
 murmuringly.

Upon this undark darkness and enchanted light
Heaven wondering gazes down, a silence infinite.
O Ocean, travelling what uncertain shadowy reign
Singst thou a song of sadness and a hampered
 strain ?

To what vast problem hast thou found no answer
 yet ?

With what sad doubt are thy steps burdened, pil-
 grim great ?

With life and death what converse dost thou hold
 to-day ?

What lyre has broken in thy hands ? what pains
 dismay ?

Songs of the Sea

All darkness earth endures, all light that reaches
life

Pour on my being, Ocean, from thy soul's huge
strife.

My soul too grows a trembling shadow mid these
shades.

What hope is here or truth ? What fear ? What lie
invades ?

Songs of the Sea

IN this hushed evening on thy billows grey
Where swells thy chant or whither flows to-day ?
To what far dimness is revealed thy cry ?
Thou for my soul prepar'st what ministry ?
The conch-shell's sound for vesper worship blown
Is now within my heart thy evening tone ;
With frankincense as at a holy tide
Like a dim temple I am purified.
Deep-souled and saved from passion and desire,
To whom then does thy solemn song aspire,
Vast worshipper ? whose rites dost thou prepare ?
Towards whom holdst thou my soul, a lamp of
prayer ?
What rhythmic hymn of power dost thou repeat ?
Initiate me, Ocean calm, complete
My heart of worship with thy mystic word :
Let all my soul with one wide prayer be stirred.

Songs of the Sea

EVENING has fallen upon the world; its fitting
tone,

O sea, thy quiet bosom gives, making dim moan,
And that wide solemn murmur, passion's ceasing
flow,

Becomes a chant of silence for our souls their
depths to know.

Thy garrulous waves have sunk to sleep upon thy
breast,

The unquiet winds have been persuaded now to
rest,

In heaven there is no moon nor star: void ancient
space

Settles on all things in its solemn measurelessness.

Is there no last desire left in thy mind to-day ?

Is love then finished for thee ? Has life done its
play ?

Therefore in this illusionless grey twilight lost

Songs of the Sea

Thou plungest down into thyself, unmoved, untossed.

I too will veil myself within my being deep :

Thou when thy musing's done, call me out of
my sleep.

Songs of the Sea

THE great heavens have no voice, the world is
lying still :

Thou too hast spoken no word awhile, O illimitable.
The evening rains down on thee its calm influences,
Thou liest a motionless flood of purity and peace ;
Thy song fallen silent in the first pale cave of night,
Keeps secret thy heart murmuring with dumb joy
of light.

My petty house of pain and pleasure sinks unshaped
In thy vast body by a tranced delight enwrapped :
All Nature floats to thee like a lotus still and sweet,
And Death and Time have paused arrested at thy
feet.

Some mighty Yogin keeps his posture on my breast,
Collected, unbreathing, mute, with lids of moveless
rest.

The light of Him I have seen, Himself I reach not.
O Sea,

Silent I'll wait ; make me one formless soul with
thee.

Songs of the Sea

O BY long prayer, by hard attempt have bloomed
two flowers, thy eyes !

Swimming with adoration they possess the skies,
And from thy love-intoxicated hymns there start
On tossing waves these new sonatas of the heart.
Heaven falters with the frequent, deep and solemn
sound,

The world is gazing as when the great Dance went
round.

A horn is blown and cymbals clash upon the void :
So deep a tabor never to earth's music was allied.
The free winged winds of dawn in their ecstatic
dance

Are circling round my soul and seek it with their
hands,

The cry of hymns of rapture in my soul's abode
Has entered, flowers of longing bloom from me
towards God.

Songs of the Sea

My heart is mad for God to-day. Though my

heart's bliss

Find or not find, sink down or float,—this, only this!

O soul-fulfiller, O adorer, sing for ever

New chants! live still for God-love and divine

endeavour.

Songs of the Sea

HERE there is light,—is't darkness on thy farther
shore ?

Thither my heart upon thy waters ferry o'er.

Something there rings from that far space ;

I know not what its strains express,

Whether 'tis light that sings or darkness cries upon
thy shore.

There will I go, my eyes shall see,

My soul shall hear unfalteringly

Anthems of light or strains of darkness on that
farther shore.

The songs of this side all are known,

My heart has cherished every tone ;

Of these I'll weave remembered garlands on thy far-
off shore.

Take me, O mighty sea, across thy long dividing
roar.

Songs of the Sea

BURNS on that other shore the mystic light

That never was lit here by eve or dawn ?

Is't there, the song eternal, infinite,

None ever heard from earthly instruments
drawn ?

Sits there than any like myself who yearns

Thirsting for unknown touches on the soul ?

Is't there, the heart's dream ? unsurpassable burns

Thy shadowy self we seek, there bright and
whole ?

My thirst is great, O mighty One ! deep, deep

The thirst is in my heart unsatisfied.

Ah, drown me in thy dumb unfathomed sleep

Or carry to that ungrasped other side.

Will not my hope's dream there be held at last ?

My barren soul grow kingly, rich and vast ?

Songs of the Sea

THIS shore and that shore,—I am tired, they pall.
Where thou art shoreless, take me from it all.
My spirit goes floating and can find oppressed
In thy unbanked immensity only rest.
Thick darkness falls upon my outer part,
A lonely stillness grips the labouring heart,
Dumb weeping with no tears to ease the eyes.
I am mad for thee, O king of mysteries.
Have I not sought thee on a million streams,
And wheresoever the voice of music dreams,
In wondrous lights and sealing shadows caught,
And every night and every day have sought?
Pilot eternal, friend unknown embraced,
O, take me to thy shoreless self at last.

